

ABSTRACT

SOCIAL WORK

GORDON, T'KAI

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A PROGRAM EVALUATION: FACTORS AFFECTING VOLUNTEER RETENTION

WITHIN THE DEKALB COUNTY CASA PROGRAM

Advisor: Sarita Davis, Ph.D.

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This process evaluation focused on volunteer retention issues at the DeKalb County Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program. Literature on the topic of volunteer retention continually reports that the problem of retention can usually be linked to the motivation of the volunteer. Marlene Wilson reviewed researchers McClelland and Atkinson's work on motivation. They identified three distinct motives that affect people's work-related behavior (Wilson, 1976): "the need for achievement, the need for power, the need for affiliation." The research considered all three motivations in varying degrees. This process evaluation assessed whether there is a relationship between status, current or former, and level of motivational satisfaction. The evaluation examined which motivational style is being catered to the most by the CASA staff: Affiliation, Achievement, Power, and Altruism. Additionally, this evaluation examined the relationship between the suggested motivational techniques and the effective management of the CASA volunteers. The Gordon-Howard Assessment Tool was the instrument. The sample consisted of 27 current volunteers who were sent surveys

through the mail. The sample also consisted of 7 former volunteers who were telephoned first for permission to mail them a survey. Those former volunteers who were not reached by telephone were sent surveys to their last known addresses. The participants vary in length of time in service, age, educational levels, occupation, and ethnicity. Ultimately, this research can be beneficial in recruiting, rewarding, and retaining volunteers.

A PROGRAM EVALUATION: FACTORS AFFECTING VOLUNTEER
RETENTION WITHIN THE DEKALB COUNTY CASA PROGRAM

A THESIS

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BY

T'KAI GORDON

WHITNEY M. YOUNG, JR., SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

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I would first like to give thanks to God for giving me the strength and stamina to pursue my Master's Degree. Without His guidance and everlasting love my life would not be what it is today—I love my life!! Secondly, I would like to thank my mother, father, and brother for their undying support. They gave me the wings to fly and the nest to always come home to. I would also like to thank my Atlanta family for making my transition into a new life filled with the roots of my past. Dearest Edna, words cannot express what our weekend chats meant to me. Your faith and wisdom will be with me always. Dr. Davis, thank you for feeding my mind and encouraging me to pursue academic excellence. Lastly, to the love of my life, Aaron Howard, I would like to thank you for always keeping me in your heart. I cannot wait to spend the rest of my life with you.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Evaluation

Volunteer organizations are becoming more important to the field of child welfare. They offset the fiscal demands of the federal and state budgets, and assist overburdened child protection case managers. The CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) program goal is designed to serve as the child's voice in juvenile court proceedings. The purpose of this study is about volunteer retention and will be used to determine some of the reasons for the high turnover of CASA volunteers, and seek ways to retain them. The findings from this evaluation will inform the program, volunteer training, and the volunteers to advocate for the best interest of the children they serve. It will also provide the CASA staff with information on how to retain the volunteers once they train them. This information will aid in maximizing the number of volunteers representing children in court proceedings. Finally, receiving feedback from volunteers will help the CASA program better serve the children in DeKalb County with abuse and neglect cases in the juvenile court system.

Background of the Problem

The DeKalb County CASA Program began in 1990 as a result of the efforts of the Child Advocate Attorney at the DeKalb Juvenile Court. The attorney recognized that the

court was not receiving enough information about each case. The case workers from the Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) were already overloaded with too many cases, so they could not provide the detailed information the court needed in order to make an informed decision regarding the cases being heard. The attorney advocated that the CASA program be implemented for the purpose of providing the detailed information the court was lacking. The program started out part-time and was staffed by Master of Social Work interns. On July 1, 1997, CASA became a full-time program (DeKalb County CASA Program Intern Manual, 1999).

DeKalb CASA follows the model of “friend of the court,” where the CASA serves as an impartial observer, conducts investigations with key people, and makes recommendations to the court. For these children, the attorney serves as the Guardian ad Litem (Litzelfelner, 2000).

The CASA volunteer is just that, a volunteer. These are adults in the community who have a personal commitment to the well being of children. They understand the enormous time commitment and their very important role in court proceedings. The volunteers are expected to commit themselves to the program for at least 12 months. They review each case intensively, maintain face-to-face contact with each child on their caseload, as well as all caretakers involved with the case. Volunteers ensure that all agencies involved with the case provide the necessary services to the child or family. They attend all court hearings, provide written reports detailing the facts they have determined, and consult with the Advocacy Coordinator.

The volunteers are expected to become knowledgeable about basic child development issues and be able to recognize variations from the norm. Volunteers attend

40 hours of pre-service training to develop competency in the above areas, as well as learn the policy and procedures of the program (DeKalb County CASA handout, no date). At the end of the training period, each volunteer takes an oath and is sworn in by the Chief Presiding Judge of the DeKalb Juvenile Court.

Statement of the Problem

The CASA program is a volunteer-based program. Volunteer Retention is vital to the CASA program's survival. Their involvement in court proceedings directly relates to volunteer participation. As it stands, there are not enough volunteers for every child involved with the Juvenile Court system in DeKalb County. In one year, the CASA staff trains approximately 40 people to serve as volunteers. In that same one-year period, approximately 20 volunteers leave CASA service. That is a retention rate of half. This research attempts to discover the relationship between volunteer retention and volunteer motivation within the CASA program. The literature review in Chapter Two will show that volunteer motivations and volunteer retention are closely related.

Significance of the Evaluation

This research will be important to the body of knowledge the program uses to operate and will maximize the program's full potential in aiding more children with court involvement. Children will benefit directly from this research. If the program can retain more volunteers as a result of the research, then more children will have representation in court, thus impacting their current living situation and status in state care. Prior research has shown that children with CASA involvement have better results than those children who do not. In the year 2000, 205 children were serviced by 101 CASA volunteers in

DeKalb County (DeKalb CASA, 2000). So far for the year 2002, 89 active volunteers service 127 children. If the program retained 25% more of its volunteers, approximately 50 more children would be represented by CASA in court proceedings, thereby 50 more children could potentially spend less time in the juvenile court system.

In summary, this volunteer-based organization has a high turnover rate. The efficacy of the national CASA program has been proven through research on children in care who have CASA volunteers. There are children in DeKalb County who would greatly benefit from having a CASA volunteer involved with their case.

The following chapters will present the literature on volunteer retention, theory of personal motivations, and the CASA philosophy will be presented. Subsequent chapters will outline the evaluation methodology, evaluation results, conclusions, and program recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter Two discusses the literature on volunteer motivation and retention. It will show that the two are very closely linked. The proposed evaluation is based on the concept of motivation affecting retention rates for volunteers. The conceptual framework is guided by the Social Exchange Theory. This chapter will explain this theory in detail and how it relates to the constructs developed for this program evaluation.

Volunteer Motivation/Retention

There is limited research on volunteer retention as a specific topic, but it is mentioned within the context of how to manage volunteer programs for success. The National CASA Association (NCASAA) has a website dedicated to supporting existing programs, distributing a wealth of information about CASA in general, conference information, and instructions on how to begin a CASA program. It is from this site that the following factors important to “today’s volunteer” were identified:

Structure-volunteers like to be part of an organizational group that has structure, but allows for flexibility.

Responsibility-volunteers in the 1990s like the feeling of being one’s own boss and not having to double check all decisions.

Reward-volunteers like to be rewarded appropriately for a job well done.

A good program will emphasize positive rewards rather than punishment.

Risk-volunteers like a sense of challenge and permission to take calculated risks.

Warmth-the feeling of good fellowship in the work group atmosphere is also important. It helps if a program has a prevailing mood that is friendly and informal, without cliques.

Support-a good program fosters a sense of mutual support; helpfulness on the part of managers and others in the group.

Standards-the emphasis should be on doing a good job.

Conflict-a difference in opinion should not be considered a liability.

Problems should be aired and resolved, not ignored. Other opinions are heard and valued.

Identity-a volunteer likes the feeling of belonging to a group and being a valuable member of a working team.

Evaluation-volunteers deserve to know where they stand so the experience is a growth experience (NCASAA Staff, April 2000).

The Delaware Family Court Report (no date), mentioned the following principal problems in retaining CASA volunteers were:

- Volunteers with full-time employment find it difficult to allocate sufficient time to their responsibilities.

- The large number of volunteers and the shortage of support staff result in the risk of inadequate supervision and of the volunteers feeling alienated or not sufficiently connected to the program.
- Changes in the family and work-related circumstances of the volunteers cause volunteers to leave the program.

Marlene Wilson (1976) reviews Abraham Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs Theory" when discussing motivations of volunteers. Wilson says, "When we remember that what a person needs is what will motivate him, then we begin to see the significance this has regarding a person's performance on the job, whether that job is paid or unpaid. Does this also suggest some interesting possibilities about why people volunteer in the first place? Or choose not to volunteer at all?" (Wilson, 1976 p.44).

Wilson also reviewed Frederick Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory (1966). Herzberg describes hygiene factors as policies, administration, supervision, working conditions, interpersonal relations, status, security, and money. Motivators are described as achievement, recognition for accomplishment, challenging work, increased responsibility, growth and development (Wilson, 1976). Herzberg's theory suggests that volunteer managers must structure the volunteer activities so that they are able to feel a sense of achievement and recognition for what they do. Although this book was written in 1976, these factors are very similar to those reported by NCASAA in 2000.

Wilson also reviewed researchers McClelland and Atkinson's work on motivation. They identified three distinct motives that affect people's work-related behavior (Wilson, 1976 p. 46), "the need for achievement, the need for power, the need

for affiliation.” Achievement motives are described as career or job related.

Volunteerism is used to boost their career status. Power motives are described as esteem or ego builders. Volunteerism is used to become the president of the advisory board, for example. Affiliation motives are described as friendship and relationship builders.

Volunteerism is a way to make friends and become involved with other members of the community.

According to Cartwright (as cited in Toseland & Rivas, 2001, p. 79), four interacting sets of variables determine a member’s attraction to a group:

1. The need for affiliation, recognition, and security.
2. The resources and prestige available through group participation.
3. Expectations of the beneficial and detrimental consequences of the group.
4. The comparison of the group with other group experiences.

He further stated that every person has all three motivations in mind when doing work, but they vary by degrees. This research is beneficial in working with volunteers because one has to understand another’s motivation for volunteering in order to understand how to retain that individual.

Analysis and Synthesis

A strength of the literature is that it consistently reports that motivation is a factor in retention (Clary, Snyder, Ridge, Copeland, Stukus, Haugen, & Miene, 1998; Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991; McSweeney & Alexander, 1996; Pearce, 1993; Powers, 1998). The literature suggests different approaches to incentives be they emotional or tangible (Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991). However, there seem to be very few

evaluations on volunteer retention. Currently, there appears to be only one study that conducted or sponsored by the National CASA Association (NCASAA), posted on the website for staff to access, The Delaware Family Court Report mentioned earlier. More empirical studies using data and statistics about what techniques work best for local programs may be useful to CASA staff.

The national body of an organization must provide tools in all areas of local management for the staff. As part of the research for this evaluation, it was discovered that although NCASAA has procedures in place for compliance reporting in the areas of: program mission and purpose, program governance, program development and implementation, graphics, national affiliation, state affiliation, human resource management, volunteer management, financial, facility, and risk management, public relations, planning and evaluation, and record keeping—there is no official standard policy of how to implement or even report the efforts made in the category of recruitment and retention. This will be further discussed in Chapter Six.

Proposed Evaluation

This process evaluation determines the relationship between the suggested motivational techniques and the effective management of the CASA volunteers. The evaluation compares current volunteers' motivational needs to those who left service to determine if motivational needs were met more for one group than the other. Additionally, the evaluation determines which motivational style is being catered to the most by the CASA staff: Affiliation, Achievement, Power, or Altruistic.

Evaluation Questions

The evaluation question is: Is there a relationship between volunteer status and type of motivation? The expectation is that active volunteers will have different motivations from former volunteers.

Objectives to be Evaluated

The mission of DeKalb County CASA Program is to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children who are under the protection of the juvenile court, seeking to assure safe, permanent families for them as quickly as possible (Volunteer Handbook, 2001). CASA accomplishes this mission by training and supporting citizen volunteers who serve as advocates for individual children (Volunteer Handbook, 2001).

Is the staff's support catering to one type of volunteer over another? Support is defined below, as well as supportive environment. Is the CASA staff creating an environment that is more satisfactory to one type of volunteer over another? For instance, is the motivation of gaining power fostered less than the motivation of altruism? Of the eight program modules the evaluator examined Volunteer Management as it relates to retention, motivational techniques, and effective management of the CASA volunteers.

DeKalb County CASA defines "support" in the Supervision Procedures section of the handbook as:

- Support. A primary responsibility of all staff, and particularly of Advocacy Coordinators, is to provide support for CASAs. This support involves negotiating the intricacies of the Juvenile Court and child welfare systems, as

well as dealing with expected stress relating to the serious issues encountered in child abuse and neglect cases. Though staff shall be good and empathetic listeners, they shall not function as mental health counselors for CASAs.

- General. The program shall at all times seek to order its resources and structures in such a manner as to provide its volunteers with optimal support for the carrying out of their duties.
- Support for Changing Roles and Involvement. Volunteers shall be provided with support: in completing their initial commitment to the organization or, when necessary, in deciding to terminate involvement early; in committing to additional time as a CASA; in moving into other roles which are more appropriate; and in leaving the organization.
- Supportive atmosphere. The organization shall strive to create and maintain an atmosphere which provides optimum support to its CASA volunteers in the performance of their work.
- Assigning new CASAs to an Advocacy Coordinator. Upon successful completion of training and being sworn in, volunteers will be assigned to Advocacy Coordinators according to the Assigned Judge.

- Reassignment of Supervisor. An Advocacy Coordinator may request reassignment of a CASA to another Advocacy Coordinator, if available, in certain circumstances. Examples of such circumstances include: unresolvable personality conflicts, or a conflict of interest arising from the Advocacy Coordinator's relationship to a particular case. A CASA may also request reassignment to another AC; the Advocacy Coordinator will evaluate this request with the Executive Director and make the determination, preferably jointly. (Volunteer Handbook, 2001).

The mission statement mentions that the program accomplishes the goal of advocating for children by training and supporting citizen volunteers. However, if it is determined that CASA is only retaining a certain type of volunteer, then the children are not being served to the best capacity possible. For example, if there is a volunteer whose primary motivation is to gain power, but the CASA staff is not fostering their motivation, the program may be missing out on the opportunity to have a very persuasive legislative advocate or lobbyist representing the program's issues. Using the knowledge gained from this program evaluation, hopefully the four motivating concepts will be integrated into the support and training of volunteers in the future.

Conceptual Framework

The guiding theory for this evaluation is the Social Exchange Theory. It is from this theory that the instrument is based. There are many theorists involved in the development of the Exchange Theory—Adam Smith (18th century), Sir James George Frazer, Bronislaw Malinowski (early 20th century), Claude Levi-Strauss, George Homans

(1970s), Peter Blau, Richard Emerson and Karen Cook (1970s). The Exchange Theory has an emphasis on social relationships dealing with cooperation, competition, conflict and coercion (Abraham, 1988). The notion of profits or rewards, and costs or punishments is a main tenant of this theory. Some rewards are economic, others are symbolic, like attention, advice, or status. These things bring satisfaction and gratification to people depending on what they consider to be rewarding in their lives. (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Thibaut and Kelley also suggest that group members' continued attraction to a group depends on the "comparison level for alternatives"—that is, the satisfaction derived from the current group experience compared with that derived from other possible experiences (Thibaut, et al., 1959).

On the other side, punishments—physical or emotional—are avoided. Behavior, according to the exchange theory, is determined by the most cost-effective, profitable, and rewarding situation (Robbins, Chatterjee & Canda 1998). If the volunteer does not feel that the program is emotionally rewarding, takes away from other more important activities, or takes away from paid employment, the volunteer may leave service.

Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen propose that volunteers do not distinguish between psychological or tangible rewards and motivations, rather they volunteer for altruistic and egotistic reasons combined. They agree with the assumption that there is no absolute altruism (Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991). "People will continue to volunteer as long as the experience as a whole is rewarding and satisfying to their unique needs" (Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991, p. 281).

In a study attempting to predict volunteer satisfaction, researchers said, ". . . individuals whose motivational concerns are served by a particular activity should derive

greater satisfaction from that activity than those whose concerns are not met” (Clary, Snyder, Ridge, Copeland, Stukas, Haugen & Miene, 1998, p. 1524).

Pearce (1993) suggests that the literature on volunteer motivations is too narrow in scope. She concludes that most literature only concentrates on motivation to join an organization and that attendance and turnover are not examined once the volunteer joins the organization. The proposed evaluation examines individual’s initial motivation to join the CASA organization, as well as which volunteer type remains with the organization. It is expected that former volunteers will be underrepresented in the type of volunteer that reports satisfaction with the organization.

This evaluation categorizes volunteers into four categories of motivation: Achievement, Power, Affiliation, and Altruistic. The instrument asks questions related to each construct. There were approximately eight questions that measured each volunteer’s response to that particular type of motivation. The evaluation profiled the type of volunteer that remains with the CASA program, as well as the type that leaves service. The current instrument is a combination of questions derived from two of the studies mentioned above, Clary et al., and Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen.

Based on the findings and conclusions in Chapters Four and Five, recommendations for program practice will be made for use by the CASA staff in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Chapter Two described the proposed evaluation, the conceptual framework and the theory guiding this program evaluation. Chapter Three describes the application of that theory, the sample of volunteers, the design, procedures, and statistical analysis used to interpret the data collected.

Sample

The sample consists of 27 current volunteers who were sent surveys through the mail. The sample also consists of 7 former volunteers who were contacted by telephone to obtain permission to send them a survey through the mail. Those former volunteers who were not reached by telephone were sent surveys to their last known addresses. The participants vary in length of time in service, age, educational levels, occupation, and ethnicities.

Measures

The current instrument is a combination of questions derived from two of the studies mentioned earlier, Clary et al. (1998), and Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen (1991). The concepts of Achievement, Power, Affiliation, and Altruism are the major constructs measured in the instrument. It determines which of these categories best describes the current and former volunteers at the CASA program. The instrument is at

the ordinal level of measure. The independent variable is volunteer status, while the dependant variable is the volunteer motivation (power, affiliation, achievement, altruism).

Design

The design for this evaluation is OX_1X_2 . The research is evaluating whether there is a comparison between status (current and former)—the independent variable X_1 and X_2 , respectively—and the volunteers' motivational style—the dependent variable O . A limitation to this design is unlike the pretest-posttest design, once recommendations are made to the program staff based on the findings of the survey, the volunteers will not be tested again. This design is not being utilized to track improvements in the management of volunteers, but rather, this design is intended to report the status of the current effect of the volunteer management policy.

The evaluation has a high level of validity because, as the results will show in Chapter Four, the instrument measured what it was intended to measure. Also, Clary et al. (1998), one of the measures upon which the present evaluation is based, reported in their results that, "The test of the six-factor solution provided confirmatory support for the six-factor model: LISREL's goodness-of-fit index (GFI) was .91 . . . "(Clary et al., 1998, p.1520).

The reliability of this evaluation is low because there was no pretest, the former volunteers surveyed may not respond a second time, and the current volunteers may leave service and become either inactive or former.

Procedures

One hundred and forty-five surveys were mailed to current, inactive, and former volunteers during the month of November. Former volunteers were contacted by telephone to gain permission first and to get their current addresses. Former volunteers who were not reached by phone were sent surveys to their last known addresses. The phone calls were made during the afternoon, early evening hours during the Thanksgiving Holiday weekend. The surveys were sent out on the same or very next day. Current volunteers were mailed their surveys two weeks prior to Thanksgiving. The CASA staff announced the upcoming arrival of the surveys in the November issue of the CASA newsletter.

Statistical Analysis

Cross-tabulation table was used to compare the independent variable status (current and former), and the dependent variable the volunteers' motivational style (achievement, affiliation, power and altruism). Cross-tabulation is a nonparametric test that presents how often each combination of values of each variable occurs. SPSS was utilized to compute the collected data.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Earlier chapters discussed the concepts of achievement, affiliation, power, and altruism in great detail. Later chapters will discuss the importance of these concepts and how to implement them into practice. This chapter reports the results of the surveys in the form of graphs in order to compare volunteer responses.

Although surveys were sent to active (current), former, or inactive volunteers, only the current and former surveys were analyzed for the purposes of this research. The demographics, however, reflect all participants surveyed including inactive volunteers.

Of the volunteers who participated in the survey 67.5% represented current volunteers, 15% were inactive, and 17.5% were former volunteers. As shown in Table 1, the ethnicity of all participants was 52.5% African American, 42.5% Caucasian, and 5% Multi-racial.

The participants were 85% female and 15% male. The participants reported 37.5% having a Bachelor's degree, while 35% reported having a Master's degree and 2.5% a Doctor of Philosophy degree. The two religions practiced the most by participants were Methodist and Baptist with 20% each.

The data showed that in the categories of Power, Affiliation, Achievement, and Altruism there was no statistically significant difference between the responses from current volunteers and former volunteers (Figure 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d). However, the former

volunteers were less motivated in all categories. The largest difference between current and former volunteers was in the category of Achievement with the current volunteer's mean of 2.9 and the former volunteer's mean of 2.5, with an average standard deviation of 1.0 and 1.4, respectively. For the means and standard deviations for all participants, including inactive volunteers, see Table 2 in Appendix D. In the category of Power it is of interest to note that all of the current volunteer responses were negative to all seven questions related to volunteering to gain power. The former volunteers responded positively to three of the seven questions that they volunteered to gain some level of power.

Although the results were not statistically significant, they are meaningful because many inferences can be made from the data. It appears as though the former volunteers are motivated by power and achievement over the other two motivations. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

Table 1.

Participant Demographic (N=40)

Variable	N	Percentage %
Status		
Active (current)	27	67.5%
Inactive	6	15.0%
Former	7	17.5%
Ethnicity		
African-American	21	52.5%
Caucasian	17	42.5%
Multi-Racial	2	5.0%
Gender		
Male	6	15.0%
Female	34	85.0%
Education		
High School	1	2.5%
Some College	9	22.5%
Bachelor's Degree	15	37.5%
Master's Degree	14	35.0%
Doctor of Philosophy	1	2.5%
Religion		
African Methodist	2	5.0%
Bahai	1	2.5%
Baptist	8	20.0%
Catholic	2	5.0%
Christian	5	12.5%
Interdenominational	1	2.5%
Jewish	2	5.0%
Methodist	8	20.0%
Methodist/Catholic	1	2.5%
Non-Denominational	4	10.0%
Non-Religious	4	10.0%
Pentecostal	1	2.5%
Presbyterian	1	2.5%

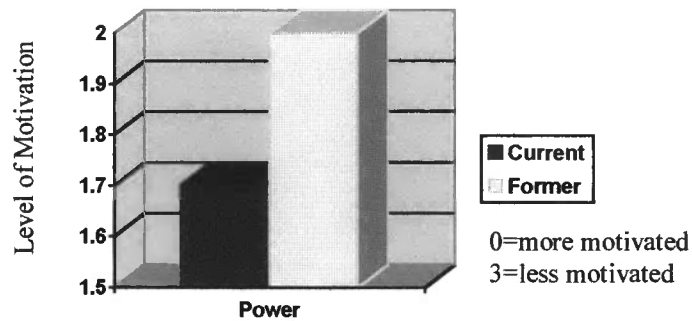


Figure 1a. Average Means of Responses by Status

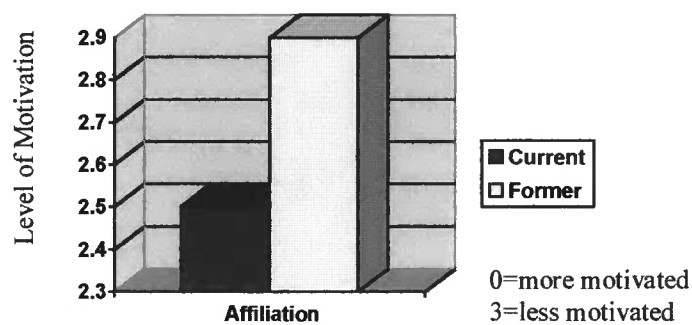


Figure 1b. Average Means of Responses by Status

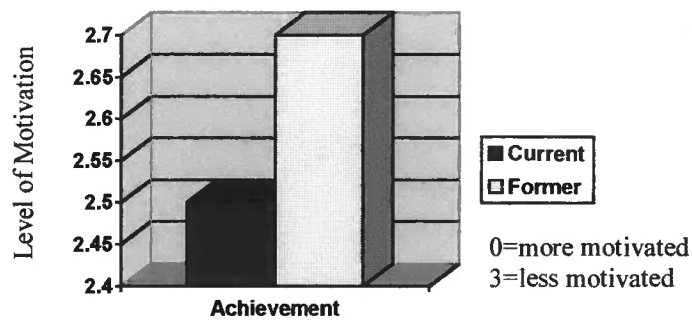


Figure 1c. Average Means of Responses by Status

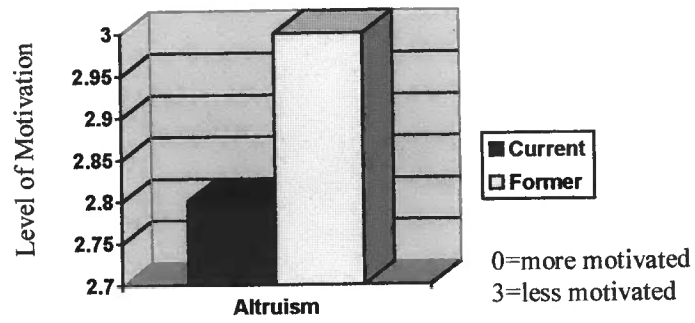


Figure 1d. Average Means of Responses by Status

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

Chapter Five interprets the results from Chapter Four. This chapter also analyzes the significance of the findings, as well as the limitations of the study. The limitations include sample size, quality of the sample, and lack of a long-term study.

Overall, the data concluded that former volunteers were less motivated in all four categories of motivation. Overall these findings did not support the study's theory that there was a clear "type" of volunteer that becomes a CASA volunteer. This also means that there is no clear reason based on type of volunteer motivation for a person to leave CASA service. The research stated that there was no statistically significant difference between current and former volunteers ($p > .05$). The results are still meaningful, however. The biggest difference was in the category of achievement. This group of former volunteers was less motivated in the area of achievement than were the current volunteers. One may be able to assume from these findings that the CASA organization did not foster these particular achievement-oriented volunteers. However, due to the very small sample of former volunteers, the evaluator makes this assumption cautiously. If this is in fact the case, suggestions have been made in Chapter Six of this evaluation for how to motivate all volunteers.

Limitations of the Evaluation

One limitation is that volunteers are mostly unaware of their motivation when doing volunteer work. Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen point out in their study, "Motivation is a difficult concept in general because, to a large extent, it is subconsciously constructed" (Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991, p. 274). Many times a volunteer has more than one motivation for deciding to volunteer. After being analyzed, the driving force behind their desire to volunteer becomes more evident. Another limitation is the lack of a long-term study to evaluate the success or failure of the motivational model of retention. Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen also state that, ". . . although there are many studies of volunteers, there are very few methodologically sound studies of [motivations to volunteer], in general, and of human services, in particular" (Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991, p.275). They call for rigorous study of volunteer motivations among "habitual direct-service volunteers." For example, this study is valid in that it measured the given objectives, however it may not be as reliable as it could be if it were done over a period of a year.

Another limitation is the size of the former volunteer sample. Approximately 30 surveys were sent to former volunteers, but only seven responded. Several were sent back as undeliverable due to change of address. Although the findings of the data were representative of the researcher's expectations, a larger sample would have been most desirable.

A final limitation to the evaluation is that the former volunteers were only able to participate if they left service of their own accord. Those who were fired were not surveyed. The reliability of the participants who were former volunteers was compromised.

In summary, the evaluation served as a valuable tool to the CASA organization. As with any study there were limitations such as small sample size, lack of long-term analysis, and the lack of an exact science when dealing with subjective human beings. Chapter Six will discuss the implications and recommendations based on the findings and conclusions of Chapters Four and Five.

CHAPTER SIX

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

As stated earlier, DeKalb CASA lost 25% of its volunteers in the year 2000, a trend they are hoping to diminish. The CASA staff cannot prevent other obligations from taking their volunteers away, but they can adopt new ways to retain and even recruit more people to become volunteers. DeKalb CASA has 89 volunteers in service at the present time. Losing 25% of that number is a significant amount when one considers that those 89 volunteers are currently serving 187 children at the beginning of this year, 2002. Increasing the amount of volunteers decreases the harshness of losing a small percentage of volunteers.

A recruitment strategy worth implementing may be marketing to the different types of volunteer motivations (i.e. need for achievement, power, affiliation, and achievement). The evaluation results found that the former volunteers had responses that leaned toward achievement and power as their motivations. In fact, one volunteer left active service to serve on DeKalb CASA's Advisory Board, a very achievement and power-oriented position. It might be to CASA's benefit to advertise that there is "room for advancement" in other areas besides direct service, and that the Advisory Board tends to hire within. Presently, CASA has volunteer positions outside of direct practice called Support Volunteers. These volunteers can contribute to Speakers' Bureau, special event staff, committee members, Professional Advisory Board, fundraising, junior volunteers

and legislative partners. These positions are currently advertised on the DeKalb CASA website, but it may behoove the staff to put more emphasis on these power and achievement positions by heavily recruiting in newspapers and on television as they do with the direct service positions.

To DeKalb CASA's credit, the staff makes special efforts to acknowledge and recognize the current volunteers. They have a newsletter to keep volunteers informed, send birthday cards to every volunteer, have picnics and volunteer appreciation banquets, and they maintain phone contact with volunteers who have active cases. All of these activities are very valuable tools for making the volunteer feel appreciated and recognized. All of these activities, however, are very affiliation oriented. The following paragraphs discuss different types of volunteers and suggest ways to retain them.

Mike Powers (1998) discussed a study by Phyllis Moen, director of Cornell University's Bronfenbrenner Life Course Center, about older Americans and volunteerism. Moen reported that the majority of people who volunteer do so because they are asked. Smaller numbers approach organizations themselves. She described three types of volunteers. The first, which she calls a spot volunteer, responds to specific needs and maintains a casual relationship with the volunteer organization. Volunteers of the second type, which many of the CASA volunteers seem to be, develop more formal and ongoing relationships with the volunteer organizations. They become involved out of personal commitment and gain a sense of gratification and accomplishment or some other reward. The third type is described as those who are forced to volunteer by their job (Powers, 1998).

Each of these types of volunteers exists and need to be sought out in ways that appeal to their motivational style. For instance, the first type Moen described may become interested if the advertisement had a sense of urgency and that the children will be lost without their help. The second type of volunteer described may be influenced by a brochure describing the different affiliations made by the CASA program and how well established and recognized the program is by the larger community. An informational where a current CASA volunteer speaks about his/her experience and sense of belonging would be beneficial to attaining this type of volunteer as well. The third type, although probably not the most desired type of volunteer, can be appealed to by a brochure stating all of the requirements and amount of hours needed for service as a volunteer. Most jobs that force their employees to volunteer are looking for a certain amount of hours to be spent in service. Each of these strategies results in the same end, recruitment of more volunteers.

There are several ways to improve volunteer retention. Ronald W. Toseland and Robert F. Rivas (2001) discuss group cohesion in their text on group dynamics. They suggest nine principles that may enhance a group's cohesiveness:

1. A high level of open interaction through program activities.
2. When members' needs are met, they want to continue participating.
Help members identify their needs and how they can be met in the group.
3. Achieving group goals makes the group more attractive to its members. Help members focus on and achieve goals.
4. Help group members cooperate rather than compete with each other.

5. Use naturally occurring intergroup competition to build intragroup bonds.
6. A group that is too large can decrease members' attraction to the group by obstructing their full participation. Compose a group that gives all members the opportunity to be fully involved.
7. Help members clarify their expectations, and strive for congruence between members' expectations and the purposes of the group.
8. Groups that offer rewards, resources, status, or prestige that members would not obtain by themselves tend to be attractive.
9. Pride in being a member of a group can increase cohesion. Help the group develop pride in its identity and purpose (Toseland & Rivas, 2001).

DeKalb CASA currently practices many of these principles of group cohesion. The second principle named above may be useful during the interview and training of volunteers before they begin active service. Discussing with a prospective volunteer all of the possible volunteer positions at the initial interview will allow for that person to identify which position he or she may be most useful. Training can be conducted for those who are interested in direct service with the children, and a specialized session specifically for those interested in other positions such as lobbying or fundraising, can be held as an additional training.

McSweeney and Alexander (1996) discuss giving volunteers support as a retention method. They suggest giving volunteers training to make them competent and confident to do what is asked of them. They also suggest providing good briefing and

debriefing for volunteers involved in potentially demanding situations. McSweeney and Alexander (1996) state that giving support also means preparing the volunteer to acknowledge his or her own needs, to be alert for signs of need in others, and to offer support to colleagues. Maintaining contact with a volunteer who may have other obligations preventing service was also suggested. Lastly, they suggested for smaller organizations to network with other organizations to develop links with external, independent, and professional services (McSweeney & Alexander, 1996).

There are many other CASA organizations in the state of Georgia. DeKalb CASA makes an effort to network with these other organizations through regional meetings and conferences. Sending volunteers to some of these conferences and meetings may increase the volunteer's desire to network and may even motivate the volunteer to make connections with organizations outside of the CASA network.

Because CASA is a volunteer-based service, recruitment is very important. Appealing to those interested in making a difference in the lives of children is the main focus. Making the CASA a paid position would counter the positive results of the program. CASA volunteers in DeKalb County contribute approximately 56,250 hours annually to case management, which roughly translates into \$1,968,750.00 in labor costs saved by the county (DeKalb CASA handout, no date). This savings helps the county budget in such a way that the court staff and members of the State House of Representatives and Senate offer themselves and their resources almost every time it is requested. They believe in the organization and can see the positive results of the program on the children involved with juvenile court. Having that support from the county gives the program a sense of stability and encourages them to expand the

program. Expansion comes in the forms of physical location, advertisement, training materials, staff members, etc.

The field of child protection against abuse and neglect has moved toward using volunteers and organizations that advocate for children. In order for volunteer-based, non-profit organizations to continue the good work they do, volunteer retention and recruitment must become a priority. Volunteerism is at an all time high. According to 1995 statistics, 48.8% of the population is volunteering, that is 93,000,000 people! The average amount of hours spent per week volunteering is 4.2 hours. The hourly value of volunteer time is \$12.84. The annual value of volunteered time is \$201,500,000,000 (Whole Earth, 1998).

DeKalb CASA loses volunteers for many different reasons. One of the reasons volunteers leave service is because their motivation is not being satisfied. This evaluation has concluded through its findings that volunteers who are achievement or power motivated may have been dissatisfied with DeKalb CASA and left service. DeKalb CASA may want to employ someone with marketing and volunteer management skills on a full-time or at least on a part-time basis. Recruitment and retention must be made a priority in order for CASA to thrive on behalf of the children.

Each CASA program has to adhere to the standards set forth in the National CASA manual called the "Standards Self-Assessment for CASA Programs." This manual has eleven standards that each local CASA program must abide by in order to be in compliance with national standards (listed in Chapter Two). Of the eleven standards, Volunteer Management, Public Relations, and Human Resources were reviewed for this evaluation. None of these standards required the local CASA program to evaluate its

retention procedures or policies. The Volunteer Management standard has a section titled: The CASA Program Provides A Framework for Recruitment, Retention, and Evaluation Of Volunteers (NCASAA Staff, no date). This section has questions related to recruitment and selecting volunteers of different ages, socio-economic levels, and ethnic backgrounds. Other questions ask if the program outlines the volunteer job description, level of commitment required, knowledge of child welfare issues, and so on. Two questions ask if there are strategies for media outreach and speaking engagements. The rest of the questions are related to the screening process of volunteers.

This one hundred and five page document does not ask one question about *how* the local programs recruit or *in what ways* the programs attempt to retain volunteers. There is no standard across the board as to how each program must implement strategies to recruit and retain volunteers.

The NCASAA has a complete website for the management of local programs. This site is very useful for disseminating information on various topics, ordering documents, contacting the national staff members, and for the overall support of local program staff members. As documented in Chapter Two, there are general suggestions on how to manage volunteer staff and ways to make them feel recognized and appreciated, but there should be a standard by which each local CASA program must specifically implement and evaluate the progress of these strategies.

Our nation's children can benefit from the goodwill of others without relying solely on state and federal policies and budget decisions. The DeKalb CASA Program is dedicated to the children they serve. The staff members are open to new suggestions and improvements on old ones because they are invested in the well being of their volunteers.

The community, juvenile court system, and local legislators recognize and appreciate the efforts of DeKalb CASA. Hopefully these findings will help them maintain their standard of excellence.

APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT FORM



Whitney M. Young, Jr.
School of Social Work

CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY

Dear Volunteer:

October 2001

My name is T'Kai Gordon and I am the former student intern at the CASA office. I have met several of you since I began in September 2000. To those of you who do not know me, I am attending Clark Atlanta University's School of Social Work in pursuit of my master's degree. I am currently working on a project that is important to the stability of the DeKalb CASA program. In short, I am conducting a research project on Volunteer Retention.

I ask that you please fill out the attached survey. Completion of the survey should take no more than 30 minutes. There is no foreseeable risk of harm to those who participate in the study. I ask that you do not share your answers or comments with other volunteers, members of the CASA office, Court, or DFCS agencies. This is a confidential survey and only the researcher will know participant names. Your participation in this research project is strictly voluntary, you can choose not to participate at any time. Additional information will be made available only after the project is complete. You can contact me at the CASA office (404) 292-5800 during business hours, or by e-mail at TKG295@aol.com.

"I have been made aware of the current research project and voluntarily choose to participate. I understand that the survey is confidential and that there is no foreseeable risk to my participation. I also understand that additional information can be made available at my request after the completion of the study."

Printed name

Signature

Date

223 JAMES P. BRAWLEY DRIVE, S.W. • ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30314-4391 • (404) 880-8000

Formed in 1988 by the consolidation of Atlanta University, 1865, and Clark College, 1869


APPENDIX B: SITE APPROVAL LETTER




DeKalb County Court Appointed Special Advocates

4301 Memorial Drive, Suite A • Decatur, Georgia 30032
404-292-5800 • Fax 404-292-5864
Email dekalbcasa@dekalbcasa.org
www.dekalbcasa.org

We, DeKalb County CASA Program, give T'Kai Gordon permission to conduct research at our agency for the sole purpose of completing the degree requirements of Master of Social Work at Clark Atlanta University. It has been explained by the researcher that the participants will not be at risk and will not suffer from any stresses or discomforts. The participants are volunteers and may remove their data at any point to the extent that it can be identified.


T'Kai Gordon
Researcher


Ann R. Eagerton, MSW
Executive Director
Site Liason

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE

The Gordon-Howard Assessment Tool

Volunteer Information: Please Circle One

Please indicate your current status as a volunteer:

(1)Active (2)Inactive (no cases) (3)No longer in service (4)In Training

How many years have you been/were you an active volunteer?

What is your ethnicity? (1)African-American (2)White/Caucasian (3)Hispanic/Latino
(4)Asian/Pacific Islander (5)American Indian/Alaskan Native (6)Multi-Racial
(7)Other _____

Gender: (1)Male/(2)Female

What is your age?

Religious Affiliation?

Highest level of education?

Current or former occupation (if retired)?

Training:

When did you receive your training? (Please indicate Fall, Spring, or Summer, and the Year)

Who conducted your training sessions?

Overall, how would you rate the training program you attended?

(1)Dissatisfactory (2)Satisfactory (3)Above Average (4)Excellent

Do you feel that your Volunteer Training prepared you for service?

Please list what you found to be the three best or most useful aspects of the training program:

If you could change the training program in any way, what changes would you make?

1. I am concerned about those less fortunate than myself.
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
2. Volunteering can help me to get my foot in the door at a place where I would like to work.
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
3. My friends volunteer.
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
4. Volunteering makes me feel important.
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
5. I am genuinely concerned about the particular group I am serving.
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
6. Volunteering allows me to explore different career options.
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
7. People I'm close to want me to volunteer.
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
8. Volunteering increases my self-esteem.
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
9. I feel compassion toward people in need.
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
10. Volunteering experience will look good on my resume.
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

APPENDIX C - continued

11. People I know share an interest in community service.
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
12. Volunteering makes me feel needed.
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
13. I feel it is important to help others.
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
14. I wanted to gain some practical experience toward paid employment (or new career).
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
15. Others with whom I am close place a high value on community service.
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
16. I can make new contacts that might help my business or career.
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
17. I can do something for a cause that is important to me.
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
18. Volunteering for others makes me feel better about myself.
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
19. Volunteering is a way to make new friends.
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
20. Volunteering will help me succeed in my chosen profession.
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
21. It is God's expectation that people will help each other.
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
22. Volunteering in this agency provides challenging activities.
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
23. I am able to relate better to the situation of the population served because of my own similar experience.
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
24. I wanted to broaden my horizons.
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

APPENDIX C - continued

25. If I did not volunteer there would be no one to carry out this volunteer work.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

26. My employer/school expects their employees/students to provide volunteer community service.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

27. Most people in my community volunteer.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

28. Being involved with this agency is considered prestigious.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

29. Volunteering creates a better society.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

30. This is an excellent educational experience.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

31. Volunteering is an opportunity to develop relationships with others.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

32. Volunteering is an opportunity to return good fortune.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

Please rank *all* of the following in order of first to last reason you would leave (or have left) the CASA program (1=first reason 6=last reason):

- () Dissatisfaction with Training
- () Stress from Difficult Cases
- () Other Obligations Preventing Service to CASA
- () Feel Ineffective in Court Process
- () Conflict with Office Staff
- () Unexpected Duties

APPENDIX D: ITEM LEVEL DESCRIPTIVE COEFFICIENTS SUMMARY TABLE

Question	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. I am concerned about those less fortunate than myself.	40	1.4250	.84391
2. Volunteering can help me to get my foot in the door at a place where I would like to work.	40	3.1250	1.22344
3. My friends volunteer.	40	2.5250	.98677
4. Volunteering makes me feel important.	40	2.7500	1.21423
5. I am genuinely concerned about the particular group I am serving.	40	1.4500	1.01147
6. Volunteering allows me to explore different career options.	40	3.0250	1.18727
7. People I am close to want me to volunteer.	40	3.1250	1.36227
8. Volunteering increases my self-esteem.	40	2.5750	1.17424
9. I feel compassion toward people in need.	40	1.6250	1.00480
10. Volunteering experience will look good on my resume.	40	3.0750	1.26871
11. People I know share an interest in community service.	40	2.2500	1.05612
12. Volunteering makes me feel needed.	40	2.5500	1.21845
13. I feel it is important to help others.	40	2.1750	1.59948
14. I wanted to gain some practical experience toward paid employment (or new career).	40	3.7750	1.04973
15. Others with whom I am close place a high value on community service.	40	2.9500	1.35779
16. I can make new contacts that might help my business or career.	40	3.7750	1.12061
17. I can do something for a cause that is important to me.	40	2.2750	1.60108

APPENDIX D - continued

18. Volunteering for others makes me feel better about myself.	40	2.8750	1.32409
19. Volunteering is a way to make new friends.	40	2.9250	1.30850
20. Volunteering will help me succeed in my chosen profession.	40	3.7250	1.08575
21. It is God's expectation that people will help each other.	40	2.7750	1.76123
22. Volunteering in this agency provides challenging activities.	40	2.4750	1.50192
23. I am able to relate better to the situation of the population served because of my own similar experience.	40	3.4750	1.30064
24. I wanted to broaden my horizons.	40	3.0500	1.29990
25. If I did not volunteer there would be no one to carry out this volunteer work.	40	3.5500	1.01147
26. My employer/school expects their employees/students to provide volunteer community service.	40	3.7250	1.17642
27. Most people in my community volunteer.	40	3.3500	1.14466
28. Being involved with this agency is considered prestigious.	40	3.5500	1.19722
29. Volunteering creates a better society.	40	1.9500	1.39505
30. This is an excellent educational experience.	40	2.0250	1.18727
31. Volunteering is an opportunity to develop relationships with others.	40	1.9500	1.01147
32. Volunteering is an opportunity to return good fortune.	40	2.0750	1.34712

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